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JAMES MOONEY

James Mooney was born at Richmond, Indiana, February 10, 1861, and died in Washington, D. C., on December 22, 1921, in his sixty-first year. His father was from West Meath, Ireland, and his mother from Meath, where the ancient capital of Tara is situated, and which in former days appertained directly to the Irish crown. He was educated in the public schools of Richmond and afterwards taught for two terms himself. In 1880 he entered the office of *The Richmond Paladium* where he worked both at the case and in the editorial room. Early developing an exceptional interest in the American Indians, he read omnivorously upon the subject and walked many miles to obtain books dealing with them. His devotion to this study culminated a few years later in a secret determination to make his way to Brazil in order to investigate the aborigines of that country, but in Washington he had the good fortune to meet Major J. W. Powell, the founder of the Bureau of American Ethnology, then in its infancy, who became so much impressed by him that he gave him a position under himself. This was in the year 1885, and from that date until his death Mr. Mooney retained his position as Ethnologist in this institution pursuing almost continuous researches among the Indian tribes of the Southeast and the Great Plains. He focussed his attention particularly upon the Cherokee and the Kiowa but extended his studies to the Cheyenne and in a lesser degree to many of the other tribes of the trans-Mississippi country and the Great Plateau. His reading was so extensive that it covered nearly all of the peoples of America north of Mexico. Before leaving Indiana he had begun the compilation of a list of Indian tribal names which was afterward of material assistance in the preparation of the well-known "Handbook of American Indians" in which he took an active part. Still later he accumulated the materials for a monumental work upon the



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population of the tribes of the same area which still remains in manuscript.

In addition to his strictly scientific work he prepared Indian exhibits on behalf of the Government for the Spanish Columbian Exposition, Madrid, Spain, 1892; the Columbian Exposition at Chicago, 1893; the Tennessee Centennial and National Exposition at Nashville, 1897; the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha, 1898; and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904, from some of which he received medals in acknowledgement of his services.

He was one of the founders of the American Anthropological Association, a member of the Anthropological Society of Washington, of which he was Vice-president in 1909-10 and President in 1914-15, and a member of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

He always had a deep love for the country of his ancestry, was an officer and local organizer in the Land League at the age of eighteen, and was a moving spirit in the formation of the Gaelic Society of Washington which he served as President from its foundation in 1907 until 1910. He wrote a number of articles on Irish customs, gave considerable attention to the study of the Irish tongue, and followed the home rule and republican movements with the utmost sympathy.

Mr. Mooney's attitude toward the subjects of his study was not merely scientific. He took an intense personal interest in them, was always ready to listen to their troubles, to lay their difficulties before those who might be able to adjust them, and to spend time and money in aiding them to obtain any and all advantages which he believed to be their just due. When he had once reached a conclusion he maintained it with unfaltering courage and clung to it with a tenacity which not infrequently seemed to his friends to be carried to extremes, but of the honesty of his intentions there could be no doubt. This attitude was oftenest in evidence in defense of a subjugated race or an oppressed class, for which the circumstances of his ancestry were no doubt largely responsible. But beneath all was an intense emotional attitude which was a part of himself and was the secret both of his success

as an ethnologist and his influence as a man. From this particular point of view he has had few equals among ethnologists and certainly no superiors. In consequence of it he had a wide acquaintance among peoples other than the Indians and those of his own race and among classes other than that to which he naturally belonged. At the time of his death he was recognized as the leading authority on the Cherokee and Kiowa Indians, as well as a foremost authority upon the Indians of the entire Plains area, while no one was probably as well read on the earlier history of the tribes north of Mexico taken as a whole. In 1897 he married Ione Lee Gaut of Cleveland, Tennessee who, with six children, survives him.

On the day after his death a meeting of ethnologists and anthropologists of the Bureau of American Ethnology and the United States National Museum and the officers of the Smithsonian Institution was held to pay honor to Mr. Mooney's memory and the following resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS: The scientific staff and the other co-workers of the Bureau of American Ethnology and of the Department of Anthropology of the United States National Museum and the officers of the Smithsonian Institution have received the sad intelligence of the death of Mr. James Mooney on the 22d day of December, 1921, who was for thirty-six years an Ethnologist in the Bureau of American Ethnology: Therefore be it

Resolved, That we do here and now record our profound sorrow in the severing of the many ties that have bound us to him during the long period of his official service in a chosen field of special effort; and that we keenly feel the loss of a painstaking and sympathetic co-worker and tireless student, whose knowledge of those ethnic activities of the American Indian, to which he gave especial attention, was unsurpassed, if indeed equalled, by that of any other scholar, and was of infinite value not only to the work of the Bureau of American Ethnology but also in kindred anthropological study wherever it may be pursued in the world at large, and whose devoted interest in his chosen study and research has been in the highest degree a source of inspiration to his colleagues and associates.

Resolved, That we share deeply in the grief of all anthropologists at the untimely passing away of one who was at once a noted student and worker in the field of ethnology, a patriotic citizen tolerant of all spiritual faiths, a fine example of Christian gentleness, and who possessed a marked independence of character and a charming personality as a man and as a friend.

Resolved, That we respectfully tender to the members of the family of our late associate our sincerest sympathy in their great bereavement.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the family of our late collaborator and friend.

(Signed) J. N. B. HEWITT,

Chairman of Committee on Resolutions

Committee on Resolutions

J. N. B. HEWITT

WALTER HOUGH

JOHN R. SWANTON

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